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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/FO AND AF/SPG
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SUBJECT: DARFUR: AU MINISTERIAL MUST DECIDE FUTURE OF AMIS

REF: BANJUL 411 (NOTAL)

¶11. (SBU) SUMMARY. African Union Peace and Security Commissioner Said Djinnit reported to international partners that in September 4 discussions with the AU, Sudan disavowed press reports that say it seeks the immediate expulsion of the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS), but confirmed its rejection of a UN peacekeeping operation and the recently adopted UNSCR ¶1706. The AU faces a dilemma: announcing it will remain indefinitely in Darfur lessens the pressure for the GOS to accept a UN transition, but announcing a withdrawal in the absence of any alternative peace support operation could spell a humanitarian disaster for thousands in Darfur. While urging AU planners and technical experts to make contingency plans for withdrawal, Commissioner Djinnit urged further engagement with China, Russia, and the League of Arab States to exert additional pressure on Sudan. No decision on the future of AMIS will be made prior to a September 18 ministerial-level AU Peace and Security Council meeting, to be held on the margins of the UNGA in New York. Acknowledging a deterioration in the political, security, and humanitarian situation in Darfur, Commissioner Djinnit also noted that the AU lacks the capacity to conduct a sustained peacekeeping operation, and reaffirmed the AU's belief that the "best way forward" remains transition to a UN operation.
END SUMMARY.

DESPITE SUDAN, AU STILL SEEKS TRANSITION TO UN

¶12. (SBU) On September 6, African Union Peace and Security Commissioner Ambassador Said Djinnit briefed AU partners on the AU's response to September 4 statements attributed to the Government of Sudan seeking the immediate expulsion of the AU Mission in Sudan. Djinnit noted that in an earlier meeting with AU Commission Chairperson Konare, Sudan's President Bashir voiced strong opposition to AMIS transition to an UN operation. The GOS also "reacted quite strongly" to the UN and AMIS during the previous week's UNSC consultations in New York, Djinnit said. To discuss Sudan's position, the AU convened a meeting of its Peace and Security Council (PSC) on September 4. Acting foreign minister Mohamed Karti also summoned AU Special Representative for Sudan Ambassador Baba Gana Kingibe on September 4, to reiterate that the GOS wanted the AU to continue its mission in Darfur, that one should

discard media reports suggesting otherwise, but that the GOS rejected both a transition to the UN as well as UNSCR 1706. The GOS had given the AU one week to clarify the future mandate of AMIS, Djinnit said.

¶3. (SBU) The AU faced a Catch-22, Djinnit said, as the more it was inclined to remain in Darfur, the less pressure it could exert on the GOS. The AU could not declare that it would remain indefinitely in Sudan, as that would provide the GOS with no incentive for UN transition. A core issue for the African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC) would be to determine what options existed, Djinnit said. Citing concerns by some unnamed PSC members and troop contributing countries, and the UN's 1994 withdrawal of peacekeepers in Somalia, Djinnit said one could not exclude the possibility of withdrawal. Noting that safe and orderly withdrawal not only of AMIS peacekeepers but also of jointly owned (i.e., by the AU and by partners) equipment would require days if not weeks or months, Djinnit said military planners from the AU Darfur Integrated Task Force would meet with technical experts from partners and troop contributing countries to discuss contingency planning in the event that AMIS must withdraw by September 30. In addition to withdrawal, Djinnit said other options included remaining for a short period beyond September 30 (from 15 days to 2 months) to provide additional time for consultations with the GOS, or to leave a substantially weaker peace support mission in place. The AU could, for example, announce that it would remain in Darfur until October; if no progress were made by then, the AU could begin measures to dismantle and withdraw.

¶4. (SBU) Djinnit reiterated the AU's commitment to peace in Darfur and its continued desire to seek a transition to a UN

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peacekeeping operation, as expressed earlier in numerous PSC communiques. He said the AU's position remained that AMIS would terminate on September 30 and that "the best way forward" was a UN transition, particularly as the AU was still developing its capacity and resources to conduct peacekeeping operations. The AU faced a significant dilemma, he added, as the June 27 ministerial-level PSC on Darfur (reftel) at the AU Summit had deferred consideration of a draft revised concept of operations for AMIS that called for increasing AMIS's capacities and logistics, and had decided to approve new tasks for AMIS but not additional resources for their implementation. As the AU had briefed the UNSC, the AU recognized Sudan's opposition to UN transition, but had assumed that efforts would be made to later Sudan's decision. Unfortunately, Djinnit said, such efforts had failed.

RUSSIA, CHINA, ARAB LEAGUE -- ALL URGED TO PRESSURE SUDAN

¶5. (SBU) Noting that AU Commission Chairperson had done his utmost to push Bashir, Djinnit urged partners to engage Russia, China, the Arab League, and possibly France to have them place greater pressure on the GOS. He noted that the AU Commission had recently met with the visiting Russian foreign minister, who had agreed to engage the GOS; the AU would soon approach China. The AU would consult with UNMIS and others in Khartoum later in the day, Djinnit said. Another tactic may be for world leaders to approach President Bashir collectively, he said; there was also room for African leaders to act, he added.

AU MINISTERIAL TO DECIDE WHETHER AMIS WILL WITHDRAW

¶6. (SBU) Media reports suggesting that the AU had failed and would immediately withdraw AMIS were misleading, Djinnit said. Withdrawal was an option, he said, but the future of AMIS would not be determined until a ministerial-level

meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) was convened September 18 in New York. Such a meeting on the margins of UNGA would facilitate further consultations with key African leaders, if needed, he said. While input from troop-contributing countries was important, the key decision-makers would be PSC ministers, Djinnit said. An earlier ministerial-level PSC was not possible, he added, as the AU needed to prepare the necessary report to the PSC but faced the Ethiopian New Year holiday (September 11), and many African ministers would be traveling to Havana for the September 10-11 Non-Aligned Movement meeting hosted by Cuba.

¶ 7. (SBU) Djinnit acknowledged that security and the humanitarian situation were deteriorating in some areas of Darfur, and that implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) had "started on a weak note" with participation of only two of four parties. Fulfilling additional tasks required 5-6 additional battalions, but none had been approved, Djinnit said, compelling the AU to do more with less. Noting that the DPA was ambiguous on the matter, he said that at the request of the GOS and SLM/A Minni Minawi, DPA non-signatories had been notified that they could no longer participate in the Ceasefire Commission. The GOS was not willing to entertain any discussion on allowing non-signatories to the DPA to participate, he said. As a result, AMIS was falsely perceived to be taking sides against non-signatories, and had been subject to several attacks. On the other hand, examples of progress included: the establishment in Khartoum of a DPA Implementation Team, development of a public information strategy, and ongoing efforts to identify a chairman and preparatory committee members for a Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation.

AU CANNOT SUSTAIN MISSION USING AD HOC FINANCING

¶ 8. (SBU) Djinnit took issue with the EC permrep's assertion

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that AU now had sufficient funding to extend AMIS. While recent cash contributions (30 mn Euros from the EC, 13.5 mn pounds from the UK, and 20 mn Euros from the Netherlands) could enable AMIS to continue beyond October, such ad hoc funding was precarious, Djinnit said, and could not serve as the basis for the AU sustaining a peace support operation. For the same reason, Djinnit added, staying in place with funding from the League of Arab States was not viable: while the League's secretary-general had informed the AU of the League's decision to support AMIS, no contributions had been received from Arab states other than a single pledge from Qatar. On the other hand, he said, the system of assessed contributions allowed by the UN was more sustainable.

PARTNER VIEWS

¶ 9. (SBU) Canadian ambassador noted that Sudan's continued opposition to UN deployment meant the situation in Darfur had reverted to 2003, and that withdrawal from Darfur, in the absence of any alternative peace support operation, would harm the AU's credibility. He also expressed concern about the disposition of 105 Canadian armored personnel carriers (APCs), fearing their seizure by the GOS. EC permrep underscored the need for a peaceful, non-military solution, as well as the need for concerted pressure on the GOS prior to September 18.

¶ 10. (SBU) Charge questioned how the AU's oft-cited principle of "non-indifference," vice the OAU's principle of non-interference, would influence the decision on whether to withdraw AMIS. In response, Djinnit said the AU had not developed sufficient capacity to implement the principle fully; the AU continued to build its institutions. He hailed the successful role being played by the 15-member AU Peace

and Security Council, noting that in contrast, under the OAU, no decision were made without the consent of the government concerned.

¶11. (SBU) US, Canada, and EU heads of mission also underscored the necessity of the AU Commission taking a more aggressive public diplomacy stance to counter media reports that suggested that the AU had given up and would withdraw. Ambassador Djinnit agreed to convene a press conference, noting that the AU had been at the forefront of attempting to seek a solution for Darfur.

¶12. (SBU) COMMENT: Chinese and Russian representatives did not attend Ambassador Djinnit's briefing, which had been requested by the AU partners' group on Darfur, chaired by the European Commission and comprising the US, Canada, NATO, the UN, and Western European donors. Separately, the AU Commission announced that the Darfur Peace Agreement Joint Commission meeting originally scheduled for September 7 in Addis Ababa has been postponed indefinitely. Scant reference was made to UNSCR 1706 and its provision of a Chapter VII peace enforcement mandate. Further engagement with China, Russia, and the League of Arab States, appear to be the only remaining options outlined by AU leadership. END COMMENT.
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